

Speak up & be heard

CONSUMER REGISTER lists summaries of major consumer proposals before Federal agencies. If you wish to submit written comments, include your name & address, state the name & *Federal Register* citation of the proposal on which you are commenting and explain your views briefly & clearly.

Wines

Amendments by Internal Revenue Service to its regulations for labeling and advertising of wines will go into effect June 1. The amendments are the result of a hearing held last July 27.

The new regulations will permit wine to be described as "vintage wine" and labeled with a vintage date even though it contains up to 5% of other wines added as a "topping" to replace wine lost by evaporation or leakage during the aging process. "Topping" is done to preserve the quality of wine by minimizing exposure to air during aging. The new regulations will remove the present requirement that the "topping" be of the same vintage (grown in the same region in the same year) as the wine to which it is added. IRS said the change was necessary because present requirements cause excessive handling and exposure of vintage wine to air during "topping." The agency also said the change was in line with practices of many foreign wine-producing countries.

The new regulations will also:

- Permit wines named after a grape-growing region to be fermented and bottled outside that region but within the state of origin as long as at least 75% of the wine is from grapes grown within the named region.

- Delete an old requirement that a bottler of wine must crush the grapes from which the wine is produced in order to use the phrase "produced and bottled by" on his label.

- Permit vintage wines to be shipped in bulk to a bottler other than the producer, as is presently allowed for other wines.

- Permit carbon dioxide instead of nitrogen gas to be used to maintain pressure on sparkling wines during transfer from tank to bottle or bottle to bottle.

- Permit "crackling wines" and similar sparkling light wines to be fermented in bulk, providing the end product is labeled: "Crackling wine—bulk process." ("Crackling wines" do not include champagnes, which are already allowed to be fermented in bulk.)

Details—*Federal Register*: April 22, page 7974.

Boating safety

May 31 is deadline for comments on Coast Guard boating safety proposals. The Coast Guard regulations cover loading, powering & emergency flotation for recreational boats less than 20 feet long, except sailboats, canoes, kayaks & inflatable boats.

The proposed standards were designed to help reduce drownings that occur when small boats sink or capsize. The proposal covers:

LOADING. Coast Guard officials hope to prevent capsizings by prescribing a formula for finding maximum weight capacity and maximum occupancy of a boat. Un-

der the proposal, manufacturers would affix a capacity plate to each craft stating its maximum load.

POWERING. The proposal outlines a formula for finding the maximum horsepower for outboard boats under normal conditions. The proposal would require prominent display of this information on the boat.

EMERGENCY FLotation. Coast Guard officials say that when a boat is swamped, occupants can survive by clinging to it. The proposal would establish minimum requirements for emergency flotation of boats that are flooded or swamped.

Details—*Federal Register*: April 22, page 8046. Send comments to U.S. Coast Guard, Room 8234, 400 7th St. SW, Washington, DC 20590.

Federal Register

June 5 is deadline for comments on a proposal of the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register to make the *Federal Register* more readable to consumers and others who use it. *Federal Register* is the authoritative source of most rules & regulations proposed & promulgated by Federal agencies.

The proposal would require clear, concise preamble statements to the notices of proposed rules and the final rules published in the register. Preambles to notices of proposed rules would discuss the major issues involved in each proposal. Preambles to final rules would discuss the basis and purpose of each rule. Under the proposal, *Federal Register* officials could refuse to publish documents that did not contain preambles. In many instances, an agency's rules must be published in the register in order to become legally effective.

Details—*Federal Register*: April 4, page 6804. Send comments to Secretary, Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, NARS, Washington, DC 20408.

Pet turtles

June 6 is deadline for comments on a Public Health Service proposal to ban the importation of small pet turtles. The PHS proposal would also prohibit interstate shipment of turtles until state health department officials certify that the pets are free from disease.

Pet turtles and tortoises can carry salmonella bacteria. In humans, these bacteria can cause severe stomach pains, nausea, fever & diarrhea. The proposal would control the health hazard by prohibiting the importation of turtles except for scientific purpose or for use in schools & colleges. The proposal would also require state health-department officials to examine samples from turtle shipments before they can be sent to another state.

Details—*Federal Register*: April 7, page 7005. Send

comments to the Hearing Clerk, Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare, Room 6-88, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

Poison prevention packaging

June 17 is deadline for comments on a Food & Drug Administration proposal to require child-proof packaging for certain antifreezes.

The FDA proposal would apply to liquid household products that contain at least four percent methyl ("wood") alcohol. This includes many windshield washer and automobile gasoline antifreeze products, paint thinners, paint and varnish removers, paint brush cleaners and shellac solvents. When swallowed, such products may cause partial or total blindness. There are other symptoms as well, including severe and even fatal respiratory & circulatory problems.

Under the proposed regulation, such products would have to be packaged in containers that a sample of children under 5 cannot open 85% of the time, but a panel of adults can open 90% of the time.

Details—*Federal Register*: April 18, page 7631. Send comments to the Hearing Clerk, Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare, Room 6-88, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

Drain cleaners

June 19 is deadline for comments on a Food & Drug Administration proposal to require special child-proof packaging for certain liquid drain cleaners.

The FDA proposal would apply to household products that contain 10% or more sulfuric acid, such as many of the liquid drain cleaners. When swallowed, such products may cause severe, even fatal, internal burns.

The FDA proposal calls for these products to be packaged in containers that a sample of children under 5 cannot open 85% of the time but that a panel of adults can open 90% of the time.

Details—*Federal Register*: April 20, page 7809. Send comments to the Hearing Clerk, Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare, Room 6-88, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

Narcotics

After Oct. 24, manufacturers of medicines that contain narcotic drugs will have to package them in special child-proof packages.

A new Food & Drug Administration regulation requires child-proof packaging for medicines that contain any of the narcotic drugs whose distribution is now con-

trolled under the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970. Controlled drugs include amphetamines, barbituates and drugs containing large amounts of codeine. FDA officials say that these drugs can cause injury and serious illness to children who swallow large dosages.

Under the FDA regulation, the drugs will have to be packaged in containers that a sample of children under 5 cannot open 85% of the time, but a panel of adults can open 90% of the time.

Details—*Federal Register*: April 27, page 8433.

Prescription drugs

June 26 is deadline for comments on a Food & Drug Administration proposal to require special child-proof packages for prescription drugs.

FDA officials say that a significant number of children under 5 have needed hospitalization in recent years because they accidentally swallowed prescription drugs. Often drugs are limited to prescription sale because they may be toxic or have other harmful effects when taken in large dosages.

The FDA proposal would apply only to drugs that are taken orally. It would require packaging that a sample of children under 5 cannot open 85% of the time, but a panel of adults can open 90% of the time.

Details—*Federal Register*: April 27, page 8461. Send comments to the Hearing Clerk, Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare, Room 6-88, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

Auto safety

July 7 is deadline for comments on a Transportation Dept. proposal to provide better visibility for automobile drivers.

Officials at the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration hope the proposal will reduce collisions caused when drivers simply do not see an object or a pedestrian until it is too late.

The proposal—which applies to passenger cars, trucks, buses and motorcycles—outlines maximum allowable obstructions in the driver's field of view. It would divide the driver's viewing space into 6 zones. Zone I would be directly in front of the driver; no part of the car would be allowed to obstruct the driver's view in Zone I. Requirements would be less stringent for the other zones.

Details—*Federal Register*: April 12, page 7210. Send comments to Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Room 5221, 400 7th St. S.W., Washington, DC 20590.

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